

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-03 SP-02 INR-07 /038 W

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R 311122Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8833

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STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MMOL, TH, VS

SUBJECT: DISESTABLISHMENT OF THAI-AM UDORN MAINTENANCE FACILITY

REF: STATE 180119

1. OUR REQUEST FOR A TEMPORARY HALT TO THE RETROGRADE OF EQUIPMENT AT THAI-AM/UDORN WAS IN RESPONSE TO AN APPEAL FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. WE RECOGNIZE THE INCONVENIENCE THIS CAUSES, BUT IT WOULD NOT SERVE OUR INTERESTS TO IGNORE A REQUEST MADE AT THAT LEVEL. APPARENTLY, RATHER LATE IN THE GAME THE RTG DECIDED TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE POSSIBILITY OF TAKING OVER THE THAI-AM FACILITY, PERHAPS IN THE MISTAKEN BELIEF IT COULD BE USED TO SERVICE FOREIGN CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT, AND WAS CONCERNED THAT EQUIPMENT ESSENTIAL TO OPERATION OF THE FACILITY WOULD BE SHIPPED OUT PRIOR TO THEIR MAKING A DECISION.

2. AMBASSADOR AND DCM HAVE TALKED WITH OFFICIALS IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AS WELL AS THE MFA AND MOD CONCERNING THAI-AM, WE HAVE ADVISED THEM THAT IN OUR OPINION THE REDUCED WORKLOAD AT THAI-AM UDORN DUE IN LARGE PART TO CHANGES IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA MAKE IT EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT THE FACILITY COULD BE OPERATED PROFITABLY. IN FACT, THIS WAS WHAT LED THAI-AM ITSELF TO DECIDE AGAINST TRYING TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE THE

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FACILITY. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO DISCUSSED THIS ON JULY 31

WITH THE UDORN GOVERNOR WHO HAS BEEN PRESSING THE RTG TO
RETAIN THE FACILITY.

3. RTG APPARENTLY ENVISIONS THE FACILITY PERFORMING
MAINTENANCE ON INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS. SWISS AIR
HAS BEEN SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED. WE DOUBT THE RTG
HAS A CLEAR IDEA OF THE AMOUNT OF WORK THAT IS AVAILABLE.
THEY MAY, FOR POLITICAL REASONS, WISH TO APPEAR TO BE
TAKING ADVANTAGE OF FACILITIES WHICH BECOME AVAILABLE
AS WE WITHDRAW EVEN IF THEY HAVE TO BE OPERATED AT A
LOSS, THEY ARE PROBABLY ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT LABOR
PROBLEMS WHICH COULD RESULT WHEN THAI-AM WORKFORCE
IS DISMISSED.

4. PRIDA PHATTAHANATHABUT, MINISTER ATTACHED TO THE
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, ASSURED DCM JULY 30 THAT MFA
WOULD BE APPROACHING US VERY SHORTLY WITH A LIST OF
ITEMS THE RTG WOULD LIKE TO RETAIN AT THAI-AM UDORN.
DCM STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF MOVING RAPIDLY SO THAT WE
CAN PROCEED WITH THE RETROGRADE OF THOSE ITEMS WE WISH
TO REMOVE.

WHITEHOUSE

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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